

T U E S D A Y ,

Social Circle



[Fresh Pond, Cambridge; October 2, 2010]

On Saturday morning, we went to Fresh Pond and joined up with my old walking group, who I hadn't seen in many months. We walked the 2.25-mile perimeter path twice around, circling and catching up on what's been happening in everyone's lives. The group was my social lifesaver when I first moved to the Boston area, a weekly 2-hour walk- and gab-fest, and I got friendly with a number of people, even going to the wedding in May of the group's leader. He runs fewer walks now, and I'm usually too busy to go, so I'm glad we managed to make this one.

I found the group through meetup.com, where I also once belonged to a Spanish language group long ago, and where I still belong to an international and arthouse film group, though I haven't been to one of those meetups in almost a year. It's another example -- along with meeting blogger friends, meeting D, landing my job -- of how the internet has facilitated offline connections and friendships in my life.

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T W I T T

Spent patch of impatiens ruffled by wind looks like the end of the night at the dance marathon. [about 22 hours ago](#)

This morning, the dryer in the basement hums and thunks like a train rolling over tracks. Where will the day carry me? [2 days ago](#)

Persistent gray mist. The clouds have fallen and can't get up. [3 days ago](#)

Dreamed that @morningporch got slick new offices. I had to ask, "But where's the porch?" I guess there's little fear of this. :-> [4 days ago](#)

Storm gone with the night, this morning's air like freshly laundered sheets. [7 days ago](#)



[Fresh Pond, Cambridge]

This weekend, we went to see [The Social Network](#), the movie based on a fictionalized account of the founding of Facebook. The movie takes on universal themes of friendship, desire to belong, class, jealousy, betrayal and it's brilliantly written, well acted and beautifully directed. It's one of those movies where you know you're in the hands of experts so you can relax and enjoy it, there will be no false notes.

As for Facebook itself, I am only a fairly recent convert. While I joined a long time ago at someone's invitation, I wasn't interested in it. Until suddenly I caught on to what it could do -- which, for me, is to keep me in touch with some far-flung acquaintances and friends, and even nearby colleagues, in a nice casual way. I sit at a desk at a PC all day long writing. We don't have a cafeteria, we eat at our desks, and everyone's writing so there's very little chatting. The work itself is sometimes interesting and sometimes an ungodly slog. Taking a break to glance at what's the latest "news" in people's lives is a small boost to the synapses. Oh look, my old colleague Randy's in Miami. Jody, who I met in Mexico several years ago, is taking a trip to Puerto Vallarta. Roberta in Texas finally got her chickens. Judy's wife made her another delicious meal, and she sounds happy. This morning I read that Tim, who went to high school with my brother and who I reconnected with a couple of years ago in Boston, got married! Facebook also occasionally puts me in real-life touch with people. I've met up with my cousins, who live in Kansas, twice this summer when they were in town, because we connected on Facebook.

I spend very little time on Facebook -- the posts are short, I rarely read any articles linked to, and I never go browsing people's pages. But when I scan through the "news" I get a warm fuzzy feeling of an everyday social network, a connection to the hive, and yes, belonging.

[follow me on Twitter](#)

P H O T

[boston, summer 2010](#)

[nantasket beach](#)

[provincetown, august 2010](#)

O N M Y



Jonathan Franzen: The Corrections



Barbara Kingsolver: The Lacuna



Stieg Larsson: The Girl Who Kicked the Horneet's Nest
(****)



Stieg Larsson: The Girl Who Played with Fire
(****)



Stieg (Author); Larsson: The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (Reprint Edition)[Dragon Tatoo]
(****)

B L O G

P E R S

[cassandra pages](#)

[feathers of hope](#)

[hoarded ordinaries](#)

[mole](#)

[small change](#)

[tasting rhubarb](#)

[the poet in you](#)

[twisted rib](#)



[Fresh Pond, Cambridge]

Blogging takes more time and thought, whether creating a post or reading others' blogs. I rarely read blogs at work because I don't have the time and anyway can't justify blog reading on the job, unless it's during a break. Facebook doesn't take the place of blogs for me at all, it takes the place of chitchatting at the coffee station, which is rare at my company. My job and my offline personal life takes the place of much of the blogging I did when I was freelancing and single. My life has simply become busier, and mostly in a good way. So I keep up here when I can, and read my blog friends' posts when I can. And... well, it's after 9pm. Time to get offline.

Posted at 09:12 PM in [Day-to-day things](#), [Personal thoughts](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(7\)](#)

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T H U R S D A Y ,

Pressed for Words



B O S T

[the boston foodie](#)

[universal hub](#)

[grub street boston](#)

O T H E

[a mouse in france](#)

[adventure journalist](#)

[blogging in paris](#)

[box elder](#)

[fragments from floyd](#)

[hurricane country](#)

[laughing~knees](#)

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[paris breakfasts](#)

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[east and west](#)

[too much sugar](#)

[under the fire star](#)

A R T

[\(p\) \(b\)](#)

[blaugustine](#)

[daily oliver](#)

[dujour](#)

[marja-leena](#)



[Newbury Street. Boston; 9/26/10]

Busy and short of time here lately. One blog-related activity has been preparing to move over to WordPress. I think I have it set up ([check it out](#)), but I want to make sure everything got moved over before I pull the plug on TypePad. I exported my posts here and imported them there and it seems that everything came over, including my archives to 2004, unless there are gaps I haven't discovered. Will let you know when it's official!

Posted at 08:02 AM in [Day-to-day things](#), [Photos](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(12\)](#)

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W E D N E S D A Y

Happy Fall



- [muse du jour](#)
- [paula's house of toast](#)
- [qarrtsiluni](#)
- [simply wait](#)
- [slow reads](#)
- [two old houses](#)
- [wish jar journal](#)
- [zillabob](#)

P O E T

- [a small stone](#)
- [grapez](#)
- [ivy is here](#)
- [patteran pages](#)
- [poetry hut](#)
- [postal poetry](#)
- [shadow cabinet](#)
- [spoil](#)
- [twists & turns](#)
- [watermark](#)

P O T P

- [2 board alley](#)
- [all about george](#)
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- [boing boing](#)
- [hydragenic](#)
- [in a dark time](#)
- [jew eat yet?](#)
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- [mittenmusings](#)
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- [realmud garden](#)
- [rebecca's pocket](#)
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- [talking tree](#)
- [the phoenix](#)
- [velveteen rabbi](#)
- [whiskey river](#)

[DeLuca's market, Newbury St, Boston; 9/12/10]

That *is* my happy face.

I've always had mixed feelings about fall, the main drawbacks being the afflictions of ragweed allergies and the awareness of ever shortening hours of daylight. September is usually the worst on both counts, ragweed pollens being high and early sundown being suddenly, alarmingly noticeable. By October, we've gotten used to the idea that summer is really over. Overnight frosts begin to kill the pollens and the gorgeous colors of autumn on crisp sunny days cheer us up. By October, we've put away our sandals and flimsy clothes and replaced them with sturdy shoes and cozy sweaters. The joyful tastes and smells of apple pies and pumpkin ravioli await.

Tonight marks the beginning of autumn in the northern hemisphere. In the Boston area, we're in the midst of a brief warm spell that belies the turn of the seasons. But it's coming. We'll know it for sure in October.

Posted at 08:01 PM in [Boston area](#), [Day-to-day things](#), [Personal thoughts](#), [Photos](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#)

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M O N D A Y ,

Cambridge Wandering



[Japanese restaurants, Porter Exchange. Cambridge MA; 9/18/10]

We went to Cambridge on Saturday so I could shop for a couple of new throw pillow for my old couch (a compromise since I'd intended to buy a new couch when I sold my condo, which of course didn't happen). My 23-year-old couch will have to stay for now, but stuffing was flying from the holes in my throw pillows so they had to go. While in Cambridge, we stopped in at the Porter Exchange and had some excellent tempura at Tampopo, one of the tiny (and cheap!) Japanese noodle restaurants that are usually packed with Asian students, but at 3:00 had a few tables open. I had a nice miso soup and tempura that was amazingly tender and light -- delicious.



| P | R | O | V |
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| 101 cookbooks | | | |
| chocolate & zucchini | | | |

| P | O | L | I |
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| atrios | | | |
| daily kos | | | |
| talking points memo | | | |
| tpmcafe | | | |

| A | S | T | R |
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| astrological musings | | | |
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| realastrologers.com | | | |

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| M | Y | O |
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| 3rd house party (radio blog) | | |

| S | U | P | P | O |
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| sakki-sakki, design & tarot | | | | |
| maddy gersh, hairstylist | | | | |
| dale favier, massage, portland or | | | | |

| A | R | C | H |
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| October 2010 | | | |
| September 2010 | | | |
| August 2010 | | | |
| July 2010 | | | |
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| May 2010 | | | |
| April 2010 | | | |
| March 2010 | | | |
| February 2010 | | | |
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[Tampopo, Porter Exchange]

I didn't have any luck finding pillows for my couch in Porter Square (we later drove out to the 'burbs and found some at a Home Goods store), but I did find a small area rug to go under my desk chair to protect my landlord's carpet. (One night last week, I had an overwhelming desire to finally move my almost unused desk out of the din of the dark spare room into the sunny back room in my apartment, which I should have done two years ago.) Anyway, rather than put a clear plastic desk mat under the chair, I found this wild Turkish-patterned "Mad Mat" at [Nomad](#) (see mat example [here](#), except mine was half the price) that will protect the carpet and might induce inspiring hallucinations besides. The mats are made from woven recycled plastic, are easy to clean, and should be pretty sturdy as they're meant to be used outdoors. Fun!



[Memorial Drive, Cambridge; 9/19/10]

On Sunday, we drove back into Cambridge (a couple of miles from my apartment) so we could wander around Harvard Square and down by the river. On Sundays in the warmer weather they close off Memorial Drive to traffic and leave it to cyclists and runners and strollers. I wasn't feeling too well, but wanted to get outside and enjoy the warm day. We ended up at the Algiers coffee house on Brattle Street, which I've gone to for years but never realized has a roof deck! It was beautiful up there, at least until our

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QARRTS! LUNI

SPAM POISON

food arrived and attracted bees, so we moved inside. I guess they run out of pollen this time of year, because they get very pesty if you try to eat outdoors.



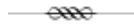
[D enjoys the sun on the rooftop at the Algiers]

September can be such a lovely time of year in New England. The oppressive heat of summer is gone, yet the sun shines and it's warm enough to be outside without bundling up. The grass hasn't gone to brown yet and a few flowers remain in bloom even as the leaves on the trees begin to turn from green to red and yellow. Even so, the early fading light makes us a little sad as we know what's coming!



[*Rosa rugosa* at a house on Brattle Street]

Tweets of Summer



[Public Garden, Boston; 9/11/10]

I posted fewer tweets this summer than in previous seasons, and several I did post felt flat. Perhaps it was the heat, which arrived early and decided to settle in like an overbearing house guest. I think of many of the snippets I tweet during long head-clearing walks on my lunch break, and this summer I rarely took more than brief walks out of sheer desperation to get out of the office, no matter how wilting the mid-day swelter. Summer is not a subtle season as a rule, and this summer was more in-your-face than usual. The bright assault of the sun and the hot, humid air sapped my energy. Wise thoughts and subtle observations retreated to the cooler lairs of my cerebellum, turning over full-system processing to perspiration, breathing, and heart pumping. I did, however, manage a few..

--- MAY ---

When her leaf-litter guise tires, she rises, vamps her tiger-striped wings, flutters off.

Home from work at 6pm, I open every window to air and birdsong. It's May.

The fresh scent of rain buds from a blossoming storm.

Giant yellow irises, ample sepals lolling like hound dogs' tongues in the sun.

Purple unitard-clad acrobats, petal handstand over sepal trapeze: Spring's iris circus.

It's restaurant-kitchen hot out, purple and copper irises carmelizing like onions in a

pan.

At dawn, the crowing of a city siren. One alley bird chirps.



--- JUNE ---

Below, brick walks undulate over tree roots and shifting fill. Above, uncertain skies and the rickety rattle of a battered air conditioner.

After the storm, the air takes a breath mint.

10pm: A halo backlights houses on Walnut from the soccer fields, a late-night game the full moon plays.

Swimming the deep blue sky, a fish fossil in cirrus.



--- JULY ---

The echinaceas turn themselves inside-out with sun-love, some sunny side up, some arched back as shuttlecocks awaiting their serve.

A cormorant punctuates a docked sloop with a question.

Humid, my hair triple-thick, spreading like dead Ophelia's in a pond of air.

Midsummer frondescence: every sidewalk crack, chainlink and picket extrudes green, every pole and rail vine-enslaved.

This morning's island-damp air, cool as beach stones, stirs the curtains. I am barefoot and in pajamas, appallingly late for work.

Walking invites divination - the palmistry of sidewalk cracks, phrenology of stone walls, physiognomy of clouds.



--- AUGUST ---

My bedroom shades can't suppress morning's infernal mirth.

The sound of sexting in the cicadasphere.

If only I could tug the strings on that giant Macy's-parade-balloon of a cloud up there to make its cooling rain shower down.

Orange berries on the mountain ash, orange sun underground before eight, my heart bittersweet.

Swell-headed sunflower ponders its roots.

Under a first-quarter August moon, Chinese flute practice next door, a background of crickets.

This morning's rain on the roof - an audience clapping.

Chinese school children led down my street, strung together like lanterns.

On the third day of rain, I wake to find my bed has sprouted tentacles, entwining me.



And thus far in September:

Dessicated sunflowers stand like shut-off shower heads, a beach closed for the season.

Posted at 09:00 PM in [Tweets](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#)

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F R I D A Y , S E P T E M

Indulgences



[Public Garden, Boston; 9/5/10]

Yesterday after work I treated myself to a facial, something I haven't done in years and rarely anyway. I was having a stressful day at work Wednesday when I saw an email from the local day spa offering a special discount, so I took them up on it. A birthday present to myself, an utter indulgence.

Virgos are not self-indulgent souls. We may spend money on good quality produce in the market, say, or herbal remedies for our many niggling maladies. Even an occasional massage is a semi-indulgence meant to soothe tensions and improve our ability to do other things; a nap is a means to have enough energy to be companionable for the evening. It seems sometimes like it's all done for some purpose. One could argue that a facial could be considered healthy skin maintenance -- certainly the estheticians who give facials tell you that -- but I don't believe it. It's pure indulgence. Which is why I did it. Call it feeding my Leo Moon, which loves indulgence and gets short shrift being hooked up in a Virgo sensibility. *Chocolate? You know it'll bother your allergies and/or keep you up all night. Tsk.*



[Arlington St, Boston; 7/25/10]

I made a point of focusing on the pleasure of the facial, the cool lotions on my face, the steam opening my pores, the massage of facial muscles tight with eye strain and teeth gritting from a hard day at the office. When my mind would wander off to my to-do list for the evening, I'd bring it back - my moment of zen. It was the most relaxing thing I've done in a long time. You can't do anything else with cooling pads on your eye lids and your hands slathered and wrapped in cellophane gloves. And since I'd told the esthetician at the beginning that I didn't want to hear about products or other services they wanted to sell me, I didn't have to do anything but receive.



[Public Garden, Boston; 7/16/10]

I like being busy, going places and seeing things on weekends, and I find work fairly fulfilling when it's not crunch mode all the time. But it's been a very hot summer and I've missed my long walks alone I used to take at lunchtime to clear my head. It's cooled down, but now I have Achilles tendonitis and can't hike around like I want to. Evenings after work are filled with making dinner, laundry and household stuff, and too much wasting time online. Maybe if I can have a resolution to this new year of my life it's to take time out to indulge more in just being and receiving - no expense required for that.

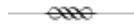
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W E D N E S D A Y , S E P

Public Wedding





[Boston Public Garden, September 5, 2010]

The Public Garden is a popular place for wedding photography, if not the ceremony itself. If you don't mind random tourists attending and showing up in your wedding photos, much less gawking and snapping their own photos of your wedding party, it's a perfect venue. Of course, I've also seen brides and bridesmaids freezing in the chill April air. But this Sunday the weather was lovely. May it bode well for the happy couple.

Posted at 08:52 AM in [Boston area](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#)

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T H U R S D A Y , S E P T

Saint Anthony's Feast



On Sunday, we stayed in town to "relax," but couldn't resist taking a walk up to the North End -- Boston's Little Italy -- for the annual celebration of Saint Anthony's Feast, the "[Feast of All Feasts](#)." Several streets within the narrow neighborhood warren were decked out with festive decorations, lined with food stalls selling fresh cannolis, sausages, calamari, pizza, pasta, etc., and the sounds of "Volare" and "That's Amore" blaring from speakers. It was a hot day, so we cooled off with gelatos when we arrived, and mostly tried to stay out of the crowds and midday sun.



Several school marching bands and Italian-American street bands made their way down Hanover Street ahead of the Grand Procession of Saint Anthony.



The locals knew the parade route and were waiting with dollars to pin to or string around the saint's statue when he arrived.



We did our bit by giving a few dollars to a gentleman who saw us perched on some steps we found on a side street, and were rewarded with a Saint Anthony pin and a couple of prayer cards.





While I'm not Italian, I was brought up Catholic, so I remembered that Saint Tony is the one you appeal to when you've lost something: "Dear Saint Anthony, Look around, Something's lost and can't be found." We hadn't lost anything, but maybe when we have, St. Tony will remember the buck we donated on his feast day. By the way, the money collected goes to a variety of charities, listed on their [web site](#) -- schools, orphanages, nursing homes, homeless shelters, and so forth.

For a few more photos, including a couple of us!, see my [Flickr set](#).

Posted at 06:18 PM in [Boston area](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(7\)](#)

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W E D N E S D A Y , S E P

Revere Beach and beyond



[Pavilion at Revere Beach; 8/28/10]

After visiting [Nantasket Beach](#) on the South Shore and [Hampton Beach](#) in New Hampshire, we figured we should continue this summer's tour of the more honky-tonk of the area's beaches (at least by reputation) by visiting Revere Beach. Just four miles north of downtown Boston, Revere Beach used to be considered the "Coney Island" of New England. According to [Wikipedia](#), it was founded in 1895 and was the country's first public beach. We knew that renovations had been done, tons of sand trucked in in recent years to smooth the three-mile crescent beach, and the honky-tonks and strip clubs torn down

and, in some spots, replaced by condos. Still, it's accessible to Boston by the MBTA subway, so it can be considered a beach for the urban working class.



[Revere's Crescent Beach]

What we found was a beautiful, long stretch of clean beach, which with Saturday's mild temperatures was sparsely populated. We drove up most of the boulevard along the strand, passing a cluster of cheap food stands topped off by the original Kelly's Roast Beef, and finally parked near the far north end. Walking back down the strand a ways, we found very few amenities (we didn't get back as far as the food stands), unlike Nantasket Beach which seemed to have bath houses every hundred feet or so and lots of food stands and beach shops. The historic pavilions at Revere Beach are shelters from the sun and little else. But it was peaceful -- and we may have been at the end of the beach where residents rather than visitors prevail.

We did park near one restaurant, [Antonia's at the Beach](#), where we shared a delicious grilled margarita pizza with fresh tomatoes, basil and garlic. A bit more upscale than Kelly's, and welcome recompense for getting through the traffic along Revere Beach Parkway.



[From Antonia's restaurant]

After hanging out on the beach awhile, we got back in the car and drove north a bit further, taking a drive around the tiny peninsula of Nahant, and continuing along the Lynn Shore Reservation and promenade, another historic strand of coastline which runs from Lynn to Swampscott. The city of Lynn has a nasty reputation ("Lynn Lynn, city of sin..."), but the "Diamond District" area along the coast has some beautiful homes and the promenade is lovely. Alas, the beach isn't clean (signs to this effect are nailed to the promenade, making me think this is not a temporary rise in bacteria levels). One hopes the situation is being remedied.




[Promenade at King's Beach, Lynn/Swampscott line]



[Promenade looking south towards Boston]

For more photos from the North Shore, see my [Flickr set](#).

Posted at 08:54 AM in [Boston area](#), [Wanderings](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(6\)](#)

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T U E S D A Y , A U G U S

Happy Hampton



[On Ocean Boulevard, Hampton Beach]

On Saturday, we headed north to the seacoast again, this time to Hampton Beach in New Hampshire. D has been wanting us to go since last summer and I'd managed to talk him out of it until this weekend, when I relented. We each spent time in our youths going

there, and it was always pretty tacky, but sometime in the 1980s it devolved further and I suppose our tastes also evolved to more upscale. When my folks bought a condo in Hampton to retire to, it was farther up the coast at North Beach, which isn't exactly "the Hamptons" but still far from the tattoo parlors and biker hangouts of Hampton Beach center.



[Hampton Beach Bandstand]



My mom told me before they moved away that plans were being drawn up to renovate the Hampton Beach facilities, hustle out the nastier elements, and restore some wholesomeness to the area. It appears that's finally happening, with construction underway on a new pavilion and walkways, with renovations coming on the bandstand and boardwalk.

What hasn't changed all that much is the boardwalk with its penny arcades, though new rides have joined the traditional skeeball, pinball machines, shooting galleries, and fortune teller.

There are also new eateries in and around the boardwalk and Casino providing alternatives to the standard fare of fried dough, pizza, subs, fried clams, and ice cream (although we did opt for pizza slices at the stands for ourselves, along with good fresh-squeezed lemonade). (By the way, the "Casino" was never a gambling casino, but an entertainment facility with a ballroom.)



[Patio Pub upstairs in the Casino]

Alas, the weather forecast of a "perfect 10" day turned out to be wrong, and though after touring the sights we did finally get out onto the large, clean, sandy beach, we had to wrap up in sweatshirts and blankets to stay warm under gray skies and cool winds coming off the Atlantic.




[Beach volleyball, or perhaps voodoo ball?]

After leaving the beach, we did stop off at North Beach so I could put my feet back on that well-trodden hard flat sand I spent so much time walking when my parents lived there. Then we headed up to Portsmouth to enjoy a nice dinner and wander.



[Market Square, Portsmouth; click for larger]

Posted at 08:51 PM in [Wanderings](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#)

 Favorite

 Reblog (0)

>>